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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

**The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: A
Case Study of the Tailored Use of
Instruments of National Power**

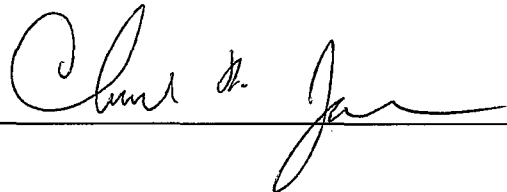
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AUTHOR:

Major Sean S. Charney

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Executive Summary

Title: The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: A Case Study of the Tailored Use of Instruments of National Power

Author: Major Sean S. Charney, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: President Kennedy and the EXCOM were able to achieve foreign policy success during the Cuban Missile Crisis because of their ability to tailor the pertinent IOPs and implement them to reach a desired level of stability between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Discussion: From 16 through 28 October 1962, President John F. Kennedy and a select group of advisors, known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOM), were faced with an enormous undertaking. They had to decide how the most powerful country in the world should employ the tools of statehood to protect its citizens from the Soviet threat without triggering events that would destroy the U.S. or its national interests. Kennedy and the EXCOM, although initially pessimistic, displayed creativity and determination as they dealt with deceit, lies, and the shifting policies of the Soviet Union.

This paper will analyze the foreign policy decisions that were made during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 using the Instruments of National Power (IOP) framework. IOPs are defined in U.S. joint doctrine as "All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational and military actions and policies."

Kennedy had at his disposal the sum of the IOPs of arguably the world's most powerful nation. During the deliberations it became apparent that the instruments of the powerful military and strong economy that the U.S. possessed would not be decisive in the context of this conflict. Although the influence of these two instruments remained significant, they were considered by Kennedy as the lesser desired instruments for this occasion. He determined that the instrument of diplomacy was the most influential to the situation even at its most tense moments.

Conclusion: President Kennedy was able to achieve a foreign policy victory during the Cuban Missile Crisis due to his keen understanding of the principle of tailored IOPs and the discernment he demonstrated while applying them throughout the deliberations. He properly identified and leveraged the influential IOPs against both the Soviet Union and Cuba. He furthered our national interests, challenged communism within the western hemisphere, retained prominence in Europe, and peacefully resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis. His decisions and actions concluded a turbulent and potentially destructive time of U.S. history and provided a demonstration for future administrations of the implementation of the IOPs and their significance during a volatile struggle.

Missile Discovery

In the early morning hours of 14 October 1962, a recently converted CIA Lockheed U-2 aircraft completed its preparation for take-off from Edwards Air Force Base in California. The airplane, piloted by Air Force Major R. Heyser, flew for nearly five hours to reach its designated target area off the southern tip of Florida. The purpose of the flight was to conduct a high altitude photo-reconnaissance mission to obtain aerial photographs of San Cristóbal, Cuba. Major Heyser piloted his specially designed plane over the western portion of the island at the prescribed altitude of 72,500 feet above sea level. He kept his aircraft steady and level as was required to produce clear and decipherable photographs. In a span of twelve minutes the camera mounted on the underside of the U-2 took 3,000 frames of data to be analyzed by the CIA's National Photographic Interpretation Center.¹ Upon Heyser's landing at McCoy Air Force Base near Orlando, Florida, two Air Force Generals retrieved the precious cargo and transported it to Washington, D.C. for analysis.² Less than forty eight hours after landing the reaction to the analysts' interpretation initiated a foreign policy showdown between the two superpowers possessing nuclear arsenals capable of permanently altering civilization.

Foreign Policy and the Instruments of Power

Foreign policy ultimately seeks to ensure the survival, security, and prosperity of a nation and its citizens. The architects of foreign policy have the responsibility to construct an intricate web of strategies and programs to best achieve this and advance their national interests. During times of confrontation, foreign policy, coupled with how a nation uses its Instruments of Power (IOP) to determine a solution, has global implications.

IOPs are defined in U.S. joint doctrine as “All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational and military actions and policies.”³ This paper will analyze the foreign policy decisions that were made during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 using the current doctrine and terminology. Each IOP provides a certain amount of leverage that is useful during the execution the foreign policy. A continual process of observation, evaluation, and customization must be used to ensure the current policy is yielding the desired end-state.

The first IOP, diplomacy, is defined as “the established method of influencing the decisions and behavior of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence. The purpose of diplomacy is to strengthen the state, nation, or organization it serves in relation to others by advancing the interests in its charge.”⁴ Diplomacy can be used by numerous representatives acting on behalf of a nation’s leadership.

There are numerous ways that the military IOP can be used to achieve foreign policy objectives. Direct aggression, troop buildups, and force deployments are some commonly used means. These can be employed independently or in combination with each other to achieve the desired outcome. Additionally, they could be conducted covertly or overtly.

Various types of communication, to include newspapers, diplomatic messages, and propaganda, are a primary means of employing the informational IOP. A delicate balance must be decided upon among the choice of words, method of dissemination, timing of the release and the target audience. Additionally, it must be scrutinized from the perspective of each recipient to ensure that the proper interpretation of the message is achieved. This particular IOP is critical in synchronizing the other instruments to maximize their effectiveness.

Since the late 1950's economic embargos had been instituted against Cuba. However, the economic instrument of power was not directly employed during the missile crisis. This IOP will therefore not be addressed in great depth in this analysis.

Combined Influence of Instrument of Power

The achievement of foreign policy can be described as the creation of a desired level of stability between two entities. This state of affairs does not necessarily depict equality but rather an acceptable level of stability. To create the desired end-state the leaders must create a combination of programs to inject the entities' IOPs into the situation.

During the Cold War Years the term 'stability' in a foreign policy context was described the result of the strategies that guaranteed mutually assured destruction (MAD) between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. These strategies and programs fueled the arms buildup of each country's nuclear arsenal to support the MAD theory thus creating global stability.

The contemporary DIME framework used for this analysis did not exist during that period therefore the current implications associated with 'stability' are quite different. Within this analysis 'stability' is defined as the aggregate sum of the influences produced by an entity's implementation of IOPs.

The combined impact of the IOPs creates a specific amount of influence that is exerted upon the situation. Depending on current national interests and the outcome desired, the leader may choose to pursue a balanced scenario (Figure 1). Each leader, during the process of observation, evaluation, and customization, retains the liberty to alter and adjust the individual weight of each instrument. This liberty allows for a scenario that creates an overall influence equal to the opposing entity but comprised of different instrument weights.

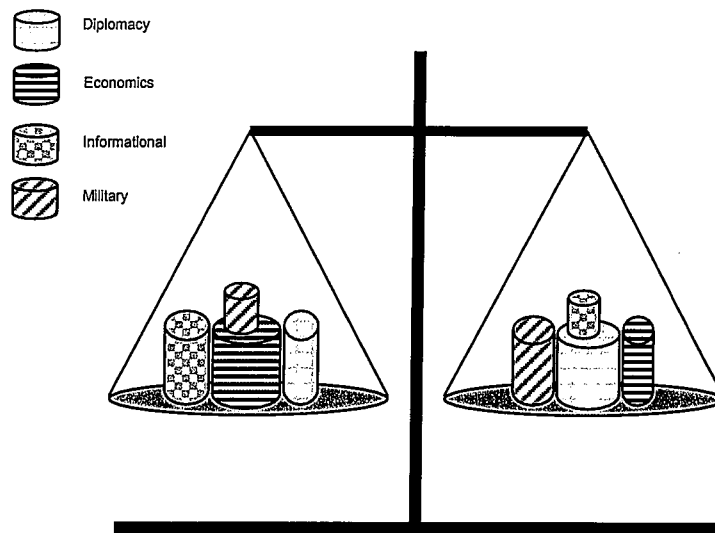


Figure 1. Balanced Level of Stability

Certain foreign policy strategies will demand a skewed approach to the issue. This approach creates a scenario where the total influence exerted by one entity is greater than the influence of the opposing entity (Figure 2). The resulting end-state is a political imbalance due to the national interests involved in the situation.

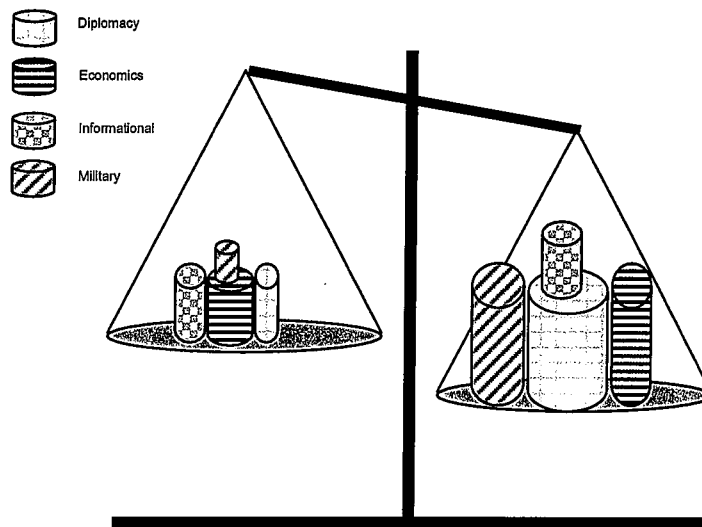


Figure 2. Skewed Level of Stability

This principle is critical when constructing the numerous strategies and programs designed to be the infrastructure of an entity's foreign policy. The process of tailoring the overall

influence to be exerted upon a situation is delicate and fragile. Foreign policy strategies must ensure that the proper amount of counter-influence is created or the desired level of stability against the opposing entity may not be achieved. Foreign policy “failures” result when strategies are unsuccessful in producing the advertised level of stability for a given situation. Foreign policy “quagmires” result when current strategies fail to produce the desired end-state in a timely manner, minimizing the human and financial costs.

Conversely, success can be achieved in foreign policy if the strategies and programs implemented by a leader meet the announced level of stability within a reasonable amount of time, keeping the human and financial cost below an acceptable threshold.

Fateful Decision

From the mid 1950s to the mid 1960s, in the early days of the Cold War, there was a period of increased tension between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Events such as the Cuban Revolution, Soviet interest in Cuba, Cuba’s conversion to communism, and the nuclear arms race exemplified the tensions of this period as did other global events such as the Berlin dispute, the placement of NATO missiles in Turkey, and an aggressive Soviet foreign policy.

In early March of 1962 the Soviet Defense Ministry and the KGB conducted a detailed review of their Cuban Policy to assess the stability of the Castro Regime and the U.S. threat to the communist foothold in Latin America. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev concluded that Cuba was showing signs of distress which caused him to wonder what form of communism Castro would adopt.⁵ In an effort to solidify Castro’s ties to Moscow, Premier Khrushchev made the choice to place nuclear capable Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) on Cuba, a mere ninety miles from the U.S. mainland. This decision confirmed Soviet support for Cuba and

demonstrated Khrushchev's willingness to challenge the U.S. and President Kennedy. His intent was to scare the U.S. and to "give them back some of their own medicine" in retaliation for U.S. missile placement in Europe.⁶ Cuba was thus set to become the venue of one of the most critical foreign policy showdowns in modern history.

When the photographs taken by Heyser's U2 confirmed the build-up of Soviet ICBMs, President John F. Kennedy and a select group of advisors, known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOM) (Table 1), were faced with an enormous undertaking. They had to decide how the most powerful country in the world should employ the tools of statehood to protect its citizens from the Soviet threat without triggering events that would destroy the U.S. or its national interests. Robert Kennedy, the President's brother and Attorney General of the U.S., had "the feeling that the noose was tightening on all of us, on Americans, on mankind, and that the bridges to escape were crumbling."⁷ Kennedy and the EXCOM, although initially pessimistic, displayed creativity and determination as they dealt with deceit, lies, and the shifting policies of the Soviet Union.

For thirteen days during the last weeks of October 1962, the future of mankind rested in the hands of President Kennedy and his EXCOM. Meeting in secrecy, they calculated the capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the IOPs available to the U.S. and developed a plan by which to employ them. President Kennedy and the EXCOM were able to achieve foreign policy success during the Cuban Missile Crisis because of their ability to tailor the pertinent IOPs and implement them to reach a desired level of stability between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Executive Committee (EXCOM) Members

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Position</u> | | <u>Name</u> | <u>Position</u> |
|----------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|--|
| George W. Ball | Under Secretary of State | | McGeorge Bundy | Special Assistant to the President for National Security |
| C. Douglas Dillon | Secretary of Treasury | | Roswell Gilpatric | Deputy Secretary of Defense |
| Lyndon B. Johnson | Vice President of U.S. | | U. Alexis Johnson | Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs |
| John F. Kennedy | President of U.S. | | Robert F. Kennedy | Attorney General |
| Edwin Martin | Asst Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs | | John McCone | Director, CIA |
| Robert McNamara | Secretary of Defense | | Paul H. Nitze | Asst Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs |
| Dean Rusk | Secretary of State | | Theodore C. Sorensen | Special Counsel o the President |
| General Maxwell D. Taylor | CJCS | | Llewellyn E. Thompson | U.S. Ambassador at Large |

Table 1. EXCOM Members

The Foundations of U.S. Foreign Policy

Foreign policy in its broadest sense “compris[es] the aggregate of the activities of a government conducted for the purpose of achieving its international objectives.”⁸ In a more specific context it can be defined as “a course of action for accomplishing a specific purpose in international relations, and includes an objective(s) and the ways and means of attaining it.”⁹

When the early settlers of the “New World” departed Europe they were seeking to establish a society that had as its foundation the qualities of prosperity, religious autonomy, and political freedom. What they sought to establish was a home where they could minimize and control the interference of outside influences. As a society they desired isolation and a lifestyle

of avoiding the entanglements of others. This became the foundation of American foreign policy.

Over the years the new American government remained focused on internal workings and governance while the growing external distractions were increasingly handled more and more by others elected or appointed into positions of power. These decisions and events contributed to America's foreign policy legacy in a significant manner: isolationism born out of the revolution for independence, the Monroe doctrine of 1823, the Doctrine of Manifest Destiny, the numerous international policy implications from World Wars I and II, and the protracted involvement in the Cold War against the Soviet Union and their allies.

The Early Years of Diplomacy

During the Revolution, the rebel leadership determined that they would not be able to defeat the British alone and decided it would be necessary to engage diplomatically with France or Spain. An alliance was needed to further the American's goals of restoring and gaining recognition of their rights as British subjects.¹⁰ As the war of independence developed, the American colonies required foreign economic and military assistance to defeat the British Empire. Through negotiations and diplomacy with the French government, aid was obtained in the form of money, supplies, troops, and weapons.

These efforts taken to secure the goals and objectives of the colonies were the first steps of a foreign policy doctrine being shaped by the Founding Fathers. As part of the agreement, the U.S. entered into a mutual aid alliance with France. The U.S. would soon learn that the diplomatic cost of having accepted assistance would be France's expectation of reciprocity in its time of need. Despite the numerous requests for assistance from France during the 1790s, the

newly established Washington administration was unable and unwilling to choose sides between the French and the British. President Washington, although the benefactor of French assistance during the war, advocated a policy of isolationism as demonstrated by his remarks during his farewell address:

“The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible...It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world...we may safely trust to alliances for extraordinary emergencies.”¹¹

The new government of the U.S. spent the next decade in debate over crucial policies of both an internal and external nature and their influences on foreign policy. Each new administration faced unfamiliar challenges and established limits of political involvement diplomatically, economically, and militarily with other countries to best achieve the national interests of the U.S.

The Diplomacy of the Monroe Doctrine

In 1823 President James Monroe proclaimed a policy of non-colonization and noninterference as a result of negotiations with Russia regarding the rights to the U.S. Pacific coast. The Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, developed the policy deterring any foreign state from interfering or influencing affairs within the western hemisphere. Although this was in response to the actions of the Russians, it was directed diplomatically towards the continued opponent of an independent U.S., the British. This became a benchmark in U.S. Foreign Policy, for it established a doctrine that has been enforced by numerous Presidents when forced to negotiate many concerns in the western hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine had at its core three

main themes: no European country could colonize within the Americas (North, South, and Central America) to include the Caribbean islands considered part of America; the U.S. would only involve itself in European affairs as a final option; any attempt to colonize would be considered a threat to national security. Ever since its inception, this doctrine has played a critical role in shaping US foreign policy and the subsequent employment of its IOPs in the Western Hemisphere.

Strong Military

The next century for the U.S. was marred by both internal and external conflict in the forms of a devastating civil war and two world wars that consumed nearly all of the focus of the U.S. The outcome of these events threatened the very essence of any country's foreign policy doctrine, that being the survival and continued existence of the state¹².

The realities of World War I and II resulted in a nation that developed the most powerful military on the globe. Much of the U.S. economic and political power was based upon its ability to project military strength to any portion of the world. This provided the leverage needed to launch U.S. into becoming a superpower.

The Cold War

The close of WWII ushered in a period of reconstruction in Europe and Asia. As reconstruction progressed, the political differences between the western allies and the Soviet Union caused tensions to rise. Disagreements ensued regarding boundaries, security, governance, zones of occupation, money and philosophy of governing. Increasing ideological

divergence helped bring about new conflict. This clash of ideologies, known as the Cold War, shaped the foreign policies of the US and Soviet Union for the next half a century. The Soviet Union and its form of socialist communism emerged as the primary threat to the freedoms and liberties associated with American democracy. In a 1946 statement, Winston Churchill made the following observation: "the Soviets did not want war, but wanted the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines".¹³

Cold War politics divided the globe into a bipolar strategic game of chess. U.S. politicians believed that nearly all international problems throughout the globe had their origin in the Soviet Union.¹⁴ Alliances were established and treaties were ratified, forcing countries to support either the free market philosophy of the democratic U.S. or the socialist communism of Soviet Union. The communist leadership claimed to hold the secrets to success and progress as a nation and began to target post-war Europe.¹⁵ The Truman administration became concerned with limiting the spread of communism and developed a doctrine of containment. This consisted of a pledge from the U.S. to prevent further expansion of communism by calling on congressional approval for the United States to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures".¹⁶

The Cold War began to consume world politics and was fought more with information, diplomacy, and economics than with guns and bombs. Organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were created to enforce these policies and the national interests of democratic Europe. As a counter to NATO the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance of socialist states in Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁷

The Nuclear Age

The approach of how a country would engage in a war had changed drastically after the U.S. employed a nuclear bomb against Japan to end WWII. In the years immediately after the war the U.S. realized its dominance and focused on building an extensive nuclear arsenal throughout the 1940s and 50's to ensure it would retain its global influence. It became evident that nuclear weapons technology had the ability to shape the future of world politics. The Soviet Union possessed the desire and proven technology to engage the U.S. in nuclear statesmanship. They used these as political leverage as they sought to spread communism around the globe.¹⁸ The fear of falling behind the Soviet Union in an arms race created a new means of accounting for power by tracking the quantity, magnitude, and method of delivery for nuclear warheads. The introduction of the ICBM became one of the most significant technological developments of the Cold War era. The successful testing of ICBM capability by the Soviet Union in 1957 demonstrated that no portion of the globe would be unreachable and free from the threat of a nuclear strike. This made the threat of a Soviet nuclear strike very real for both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Both countries believed the other possessed the ICBMs, warheads, and the navigation systems technology required to accurately employ and deploy these weapons. Intelligence estimates at the time reinforced these assumptions, although neither country had been able to fully test a complete ICBM due to the impractical nature and danger of conducting such a test. The U.S. and Soviet Union sought alternate means to place launch sites closer to their planned targets, therefore decreasing the range and the dependence upon the untested ICBMs. One method developed to achieve the reduced range was to create a mobile launch capability with the ability to move undetected to a launch position close enough to the targets to

engage them with the proven Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM). This created a submarine fleet capable of transporting and launching nuclear warheads.

In October 1959, a U.S. foreign policy agreement with NATO initiated the deployment of nuclear missile systems to its European NATO allies as a statement of deterrence against the Soviet Union.¹⁹ This agreement placed missiles in Great Britain, France, Italy and Turkey. An immediate concern to the Soviet Union was the placement of fifteen missiles in Izmir, Turkey, which placed U.S. owned - but Turkish controlled - nuclear warheads within 1300 miles of Moscow, a mere sixteen minute post-launch flight time.²⁰

The Caribbean Crisis Begins

Fidel Castro's defeat of Fulgencio Batista and his appointment to Premier and President of Cuba in 1959 gave rise to new international tensions in the Caribbean. The Eisenhower administration established diplomatic relations with Castro during the revolution because of the discord and corruption within the Batista regime.²¹ The U.S. extended an arm of diplomacy to Castro due to his repeated statements during a 1959 visit to the U.S. that his revolutionary movement was not communist in its beliefs.²² What was unknown at the time was that Raul Castro, Fidel's younger brother, was secretly meeting with members of the Czechoslovakian and Polish governments in an effort to procure weapons for Cuban military forces.²³ These secret meetings opened a dialogue between the Warsaw Pact communists and members of the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), the Cuban Communist Party. The leaders in the Kremlin believed they had the obligation to support revolutionary movements around the globe. Once notified about the request for weapons and advisory support from Castro's Cuba,

the Soviets decided the risk of assisting a new communist satellite in Latin America was worth challenging the U.S. and its foreign policies against intervention within the western hemisphere.

The Kennedy Administration

The presidential election of 1960 awarded the oval office to a northern Democrat from Massachusetts named John Fitzgerald Kennedy. As a former congressman and senator, President Kennedy had thirteen years of political experience coupled with an honors degree in International Affairs from Harvard. Even these credentials did not prevent many from questioning his capabilities and competence. His administration was confronted with numerous foreign policy challenges immediately upon taking office. The most serious of them dealt with the continued expansion of communism in Europe and Latin America, Cold War politics, the nuclear arms race, and Soviet Union's fraternal assistance to Cuba. These events set the stage for the dramatic scenario that had the potential to create a nuclear catastrophe.

The Showdown

The U.S. severed diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba in January 1961. Later that year, at its conference in Uruguay, the Organization of the American States (OAS) voted to exclude Cuba "from participation in the inter-American system." The measure was approved and an additional resolution was also adopted prohibiting OAS members from selling arms to Cuba.²⁴

A U.S. Senate resolution regarding Cuba authorized the use of force, if necessary, to curb Cuban aggression and subversion in the western hemisphere. The resolution stated that the U.S.

was determined "to prevent the creation or use of an externally supported offensive military capability endangering the security of the U.S." and to "support the aspirations of the Cuban people for a return to self-determination." In the House of Representatives, a foreign aid appropriations bill had approved amendments designed to terminate aid to any country that used merchant ships to transport arms or goods of any type to Cuba.²⁵ These policies existed before the confirmation of the missile sites and worsened with the placement of the Soviet missiles.

In 1947 when Kennedy was a first year congressman he wrote: "The greatest danger is a war which would be waged by the conscious decisions of the leaders of Russia... She will have the atomic bomb, the planes, the ports, and the ships to wage aggressive war outside her borders...Such a conflict would truly mean the end of the world, and all of our diplomacy and prayers must be exerted to avoid it."²⁶ The confrontation that developed in the Caribbean reflected those comments and Kennedy's determination to evade war with Soviet Union. He would remain committed to the foreign policy doctrines that formed the cornerstone of U.S. diplomacy since its founding as a free nation. Those of the Monroe Doctrine, the post-WWII Containment Policy, and the Truman Doctrine were instrumental for President Kennedy during the crisis deliberations. The main unknown facing EXCOM was the Soviet Union's actual intention for placing missiles in Cuba. Additionally, the question of time still remained. How long did Kennedy and the EXCOM have to continue their deliberations?

In the Military Arena

The employment of U.S. military forces in the Caribbean did not begin with the Soviet deployment of missiles, but rather as a consequence of the Spanish-American war. The U.S. had had a permanent presence in Cuba since the war as a result of the conditions of the peace

negotiations. Months prior to the discovery of the missiles, Kennedy commented that the U.S. Armed Forces would not intervene in Cuban affairs, and that any conflict that took place would be “between the Cubans themselves”.

The first meeting of the EXCOM on 16 October just a few hours after Kennedy was notified about the missile locations. All of the EXCOM members were initially convinced that the only options available involved offensive military action. Their convictions were based upon a firm belief that the Soviet Union would only respect and respond to the use of force and that they would not initiate WWII with their reactions. Kennedy was convinced that if he would respond militarily in Cuba, the Soviets would use that action as justification to invade Berlin. The EXCOM recommended a variety of options ranging from surgical air strikes on the missile sites to a comprehensive series of attacks and invasions throughout the island. When the initial meeting adjourned, the group was in agreement to move forward with some form of military retaliation. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and the Joint Chiefs began the process of troop alerts and issuance of initial guidance to the military to prepare for future actions.

Later that same day a second EXCOM meeting was held and it was decided that the missiles would not be operational for a few more days. This provided the committee additional time before having to act. Further deliberation quieted the assertive members known as the “Hawks” and facilitated discussion of additional alternatives. The “Hawks” were those members of the EXCOM who desired a swift military response and held little patience for other means of determining a resolution. Supplementary options included a naval blockade of the island, troop movements to increase the forces stationed in the southeast, reinforcement of the garrison at Guantanamo, and increased covert support of the U.S. backed guerrillas.²⁷

Over the course of the next few meetings, Secretary McNamara and the Joint Chiefs presented Kennedy with an extensive discussion on decision points related to potential actions

and reactions involving military power. The discussions included a risk assessment of the potential outcomes, risks, and gains of various military responses. The group agreed that military action against the missile sites would only be effective against non-operational sites. Once the missile sites were operational, the risk that aggressive action on the part of the U.S. would be met by Soviet retaliatory launches increased significantly. The detailed requirements that arose during the planning for limited surgical air strikes developed into a massive list of military assets that Kennedy was not ready to commit to the crisis. Strikes against the missile sites no longer seemed an appropriate reaction but instead were seen as carrying too great a risk of escalation.

By mid-day 18 October, Robert Kennedy was adamantly opposed to any plan that involved sneak attacks, maintaining that it would be counter to U.S. policy and would create a perception of deceit, similar to the U.S. sentiments towards the Japanese after the attack on Pearl Harbor.²⁸ This analogy was repeated by numerous EXCOM members who began to question the legitimacy of hostile military action against the Cubans.

The option of a less aggressive response to allow “cooler heads to prevail” was viewed by the Hawks as “too weak of a position” for the U.S. to take.²⁹ As the confrontation continued, a mix of troop increases and deployments were employed that would allow for direct aggression if required. Kennedy decided he would enforce whatever option received the full consensus of the EXCOM.³⁰ After continued deliberations, it was decided that a quarantine of Cuba be executed by military forces would provide the proper level of response as well as additional time to monitor the Soviet actions. The blockade concept continued to gain support among the members of the EXCOM. The blockade was considered a strong enough action to promote a reaction of war from the Soviet Union.

Although Kennedy had determined that an aggressive military response would not benefit the situation, he did acknowledge the significance it had to the crisis. He repeatedly had the EXCOM plan for a military response as the crisis developed with the hope of not having to employ it. He continued to outwardly portray that a military response remained a feasible and readily available option should the situation deteriorate. His decision to utilize the military to reinforce the diplomatic efforts displayed a creative understanding of the application of IOPs to a crisis.

Kennedy respected the military IOP and understood the restraint with which it must be applied. The enormously devastating power held by the U.S. military must be dispensed with discretion and humility. Kennedy personally showed both discretion and humility throughout the crisis deliberations.

In the Diplomatic Arena

The Kennedy administration was conscious of the need to establish legitimacy with the world community and especially its allies in dealing with the missile issue. They realized that without the political support and backing of world opinion and their allies, their planned actions would be viewed as unjustifiable.

During the morning EXCOM meeting on 18 October, Defense Secretary McNamara presented three options to confront the Soviet Union. The first of those was a diplomatic option that consisted of an open discourse between the primary decision-makers involved. His other options supported the views and thoughts of the aggressive military leaders. Due to the passions resident within the EXCOM, the group spent many more hours in debate over the military options and placed the diplomatic concerns aside. Kennedy realized that the engagement of

formal diplomacy remained one of the responsibilities and duties as the chief executive of the U.S. Since a majority of the EXCOM was focused primarily on military action, he seemed determined to actively seek diplomatic engagement himself.

Kennedy continued to encourage all of the departments involved to explore diplomatic efforts. The State Department reported that based on information from Khrushchev himself "...activity on Cuba was defensive and sharply criticizes U.S. bases in Turkey and Italy".³¹ The U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Adlai Stevenson, advised Kennedy early on that world opinion would equate the missiles in Turkey to the efforts of the Soviet Union in Cuba. Stevenson was an early supporter of the use of diplomacy but he was out-maneuvered by those in favor of a more aggressive response. Kennedy met with numerous emissaries of the Soviet Union sent to the U.S. to propagate the Kremlin's propaganda. They echoed the concerns expressed by Khrushchev over Cuba's well being and the negative impacts of the current U.S. policies on the Cuban people.

Kennedy decided to employ a balanced scheme of diplomacy to bring the crisis to a peaceful close. In addition to the different departments' efforts, he initiated diplomacy at a leader-to-leader level by sending Khrushchev personal letters. These letters opened a dialogue between the leaders in which both expressed their sincere hope to avoid catastrophic consequences if the situation in Cuba was not resolved diplomatically.

Kennedy continued to stress the need for control and prudence through his numerous communiqués with the Soviet leader. Kennedy used this means of diplomacy in an effort to appeal to Khrushchev's emotions and common fears of the enormity of the situation.

Throughout the crisis it was evident to the EXCOM that Kennedy had developed an aversion to aggressive military action. He was not willing to place at risk thousands of service members if there remained the possibility of diplomatic resolution. Even during the execution of

the naval quarantine when tensions rose to a level where hostilities seemed unavoidable, Kennedy's intentions were known to the key leaders involved.

Kennedy's use of third party diplomacy proved successful once both the Soviets and U.S. determined the proper candidates to conduct this style of negotiations. The U.S. employed members of the U.N., significant members of the press, and noteworthy embassy personnel to engage in deliberations during the crisis. These methods of deliberation enabled the discussion of multiple options that could not be debated openly due to public opinion. Kennedy was convinced that a peaceful means could be establish that would bring an end to the crisis.

In the Informational Arena

Premier Khrushchev told a gathering at the Cuban embassy in Moscow: "Alarming news is coming from Cuba at present, news that the most aggressive American monopolists are preparing a direct attack on Cuba." Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin assured U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Adlai Stevenson, that "only defensive weapons are being supplied" to Cuba. Robert Kennedy met with Ambassador Dobrynin and was informed that Premier Khrushchev assured President Kennedy that there would be no surface-to-surface missiles or offensive weapons placed in Cuba. Robert Kennedy related the conversation to the president and suggested issuing a statement making it clear that the U.S. would not tolerate the introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba.³²

President Kennedy released a statement which revealed that surface to air missiles and substantially more military personnel than previously estimated had been detected in Cuba. Kennedy did concede, however, that: "There is no evidence of any organized combat force in Cuba from any Soviet Bloc country; of military bases provided to Russia; of a violation of the

1934 treaty relating to Guantanamo; of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles; or of other significant offensive capability...Were it otherwise the gravest issues would arise."³³

President Kennedy, at a news conference, stated that Fidel Castro, "in a frantic effort to bolster his regime," was attempting to "arouse the Cuban people by charges of an imminent American invasion." The president reiterated that new movements of Soviet technical and military personnel to Cuba did not constitute a serious threat and that "unilateral military intervention on the part of the United States cannot currently be either required or justified." Nevertheless, he again warned that if Cuba "should ever attempt to export its aggressive purposes by force...or become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies."³⁴

In addition to the information that the U.S. wanted released, there were many occasions that sensitive information was withheld for nation security reasons. Extraordinary measures were emplaced to initially conceal the extent of the crisis until President Kennedy was fully prepared to engage the nation with the issues.

Conclusion

President Kennedy was able to achieve a foreign policy victory during the Cuban Missile Crisis due to his keen understanding of the principle of tailored IOPs and the discernment he demonstrated while applying them throughout the deliberations. He properly identified and leveraged the influential IOPs against both the Soviet Union and Cuba. He furthered the national interests, challenged communism within the western hemisphere, retained prominence in Europe, and peacefully resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis. His decisions and actions concluded a

turbulent and potentially destructive time of U.S. history and provided a demonstration for future administrations of the implementation of the IOPs and their significance during a volatile struggle.

Kennedy had at his disposal the sum of the IOPs of arguably the world's most powerful nation. During the deliberations it became apparent that the instruments of the powerful military and strong economy that the U.S. possessed would not be decisive in the context of this conflict. Although the influence of these two instruments remained significant, they were considered by Kennedy as the lesser desired instruments for this occasion. He determined that the instrument of diplomacy was the most influential to the situation even at its most tense moments. As the crisis developed, the military IOP became useful as a means of reinforcement to the diplomatic efforts he had employed.

A fifth instrument, the human dynamic of the leaders, was discovered during this analysis in addition to the DIME framework. The influence it imparted was created from the individual personalities of Kennedy and Khrushchev. It was unrelated to the leadership positions they occupied but deeply related to the personal beliefs and fears each of them held regarding the potential outcomes of the crisis. Both understood the limits and expectations associated with their political role but they permitted their personal feelings to influence their decision processes. During the intense moments of the crisis Kennedy and Khrushchev both demonstrated this dynamic by expressing their unwillingness to be responsible for initiating the military offensive action that would have lead to WWII. The amount of influence created by this dynamic can not be predicted and therefore the level to which it will alter the outcome of an event is not known outside of a crisis. What is evident is that the additional instrument exists but the influence it will exert depends upon the value the leaders attribute to what may be lost during the crisis.

Kennedy and his EXCOM went to great lengths to ensure the legitimacy of their actions due to the negative international perceptions caused by the past failures of American foreign policies towards Cuba. They explored the effectiveness of each IOP and engaged in the critical thinking process to identify that the desired outcome was the removal of the missiles from the hemisphere. Once this problem had been identified they resisted the temptation to resolve supplementary issues and remained focused on removal of the missiles.

It is unknown if the 1962 missile crisis in the Caribbean will remain the premier example of near thermo-nuclear mutually assured destruction in our history. The actions and decisions that played out during the missile crisis were a direct result of four years of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic tensions fueled by Cold War ideology, expansionism, imperialism, pride, military power, and politics. These fundamental factors of international politics may potentially create a chaotic and unstable environment that will serve as the incubator for the next conflict. Future leaders must understand the delicate process of determining the desired level of stability and the designing of strategies and programs to achieve that end-state. Throughout this process the concept of tailoring the IOPs to create the proper amount of influence remains crucial. The application of this principle may be the solution that will avoid a foreign policy failure or a quagmire. The U.S. and a country such as North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, or some other future rogue state that has the money and potential to procure an offensive nuclear capability could likely become the next participants a future "missile crisis".

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- ³ *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Joint Pub 1-02*. Pg. 272
- ⁴ <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9106182/diplomacy> accessed Jan 2008
- ⁵ Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. 167
- ⁶ Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. 182.
- ⁷ Kennedy, Robert F. *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1971. 97.
- ⁸ Hartmann, Frederick H. *The New Age of American Foreign Policy*. New York: Macmillan Pub Co, 1970. 6.
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- ¹⁰ Pratt, Julius W. *History of United States Foreign Policy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980. 11.
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- ¹⁷ Jones 300.
- ¹⁸ Freedman, 18.
- ¹⁹ Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. 197.
- ²⁰ Stern, Sheldon. *Averting 'The Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings (Stanford Nuclear Age Series)*. Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2003. 9.
- ²¹ Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. 7.
- ²² Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. 11.
- ²³ Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. 22.
- ²⁴ "Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 Volume XI Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath" U.S. Policy toward Cuba and Related Events 1 November 1961 - 15 March 1963, 3/16/63,
- ²⁵ The Cuban Missile Crisis Timeline (2008). Available from: Nuclearfiles.org
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- ²⁶ John F. Kennedy, *Aid for Greece and Turkey*, Record of the House of Representatives, April 1947.
- ²⁷ Stern, Sheldon. *Averting 'The Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings (Stanford Nuclear Age Series)*. 65.
- ²⁸ Stern 154.
- ²⁹ Stern 69-70.
- ³⁰ Kennedy 35.
- ³¹ Sorenson Theodore C. Kennedy. New York: Bantam Books, 1966. 691.
- ³² Stern 206.
- ³³ Fursenko, Aleksandr and Timothy J. Naftali. 206.
- ³⁴ Freedman 165.

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